

Pastor sentenced in Iran Present whereabouts unknown



ABEDINI

WASHINGTON (BP and local reports) — The U.S. government and the U.S. Commission on International Religious Freedom (USCIRF) have issued calls for the release of an American pastor who has vanished within the Iranian prison system after being sentenced to eight years for spreading the Gospel in Iran.

Saeed Abedini, an Iranian-born pastor who is a naturalized U.S. citizen, faced charges of undermining the Iranian government by planting house churches and of trying to turn the country's youth from Islam, according to media reports. His family expressed their concern for his safety and well-being after they were able to locate him or talk with him.

Abedini's supporters say he was in Iran last summer to finish building an orphanage when members of the Iranian Revolutionary Guard hauled him away in a bus for prison, according to World Watch Monitor, a Christian news service focusing on the persecuted church.

Abedini has suffered beatings while in prison and faced trial before a Revolutionary Court judge, Abbas Pir-Abbassi, labeled a human rights violator by the European Union and infamous for his harsh sentencing including executions of students who protested Iran's 2009 elections.

The U.S. State Department over the weekend issued a strongly-worded

see ABEDINI on p. 9

Langworthy convicted of sex crimes with young boys; sentence suspended

JACKSON, MS (Special) — Former Baptist music minister and high school choral director John Langworthy of Clinton dodged prison time as part of a plea deal in which he admitted to five felony counts of gratification of lust during a Jan. 22 hearing before Hinds County Circuit Judge Bill Gowan.

Gowan sentenced Langworthy, who was indicted on eight counts of having sexual contact decades ago with young boys while he served on the music staffs of Jackson-area Baptist churches, to a total of 50 years in prison but suspended all the sentences. The judge placed Langworthy on five years supervised probation, and ordered him to register as a sex offender and have no contact with his victims.

Langworthy previously confessed that he committed sexual "indiscretions" with children while working at Mississippi and Texas Baptist churches. He also contended that he has not sexually abused anyone since returning to

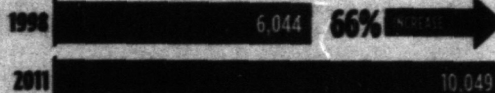
Mississippi after allegations of inappropriate sexual conduct surfaced at the Texas church 22 years ago.

Hinds County District Attorney Robert Shuler Smith explained that although the evidence in the case was strong, he and Langworthy's victims agreed to the plea bargain because Langworthy's attorney had raised questions about whether the statute of limitations had expired on the alleged crimes, meaning Langworthy might have been able to get the charges dismissed if a judge or appeals court agreed.

Smith also said after the hearing that it's "certainly a possibility" there could be further action in Langworthy's case, but he did not specify what those actions might be.

Langworthy did not comment as he left the courthouse with his wife Kathy. His future plans are unclear, although his last known place of employment was at a small pharmacy in Clinton.

Number of Non-Anglo SBC Congregations



Ethnic congregations see big jump in SBC

ALPHARETTA, Ga. (BP) — The number of non-Anglo congregations in the Southern Baptist Convention (SBC) has jumped by more than 66% since 1998 and now comprises almost 20% of the convention's churches, according to the Center for Missional Research at the SBC's North American Mission Board (NAMB) in Alpharetta, Ga.

A total of 10,049 congregations of 50,768 congregations in the convention identified themselves by an ethnicity other than Anglo in 2011, the most recent year for which detailed data on ethnicity is available from Annual Church Profile (ACP) database at LifeWay Christian Resources of the SBC in Nashville. In 1998, non-Anglo congregations totaled 6,044.

"It's clear that Southern Baptists have been multi-ethnic and are becoming an even more multi-ethnic convention of churches," said Joseph Lee, senior pastor of Connexion Church in Lawrenceville, Ga., a mostly Korean Southern Baptist congregation.

"The trend is gaining speed week by week. For example, the ethnic churches grew from zero to more than half of the total number of churches in our county in the past 10 years," he said.

The diversification of the convention comes at a time when the United States as a whole is growing more diverse. USA Today, for example, has reported that the number of all-white communities in the country has plummeted since 1980, according to an analysis of census data by Penn State University's Population Research Institute. Less than a third of U.S. counties are 90% Caucasian.

The largest jump in non-Anglo congregations within the SBC from 1998-2011 has predominantly come from an 82.7% increase in the number of African American congregations.

For Fred Luter, pastor of

Franklin Avenue Church in New Orleans and the first-ever African American president of the SBC, the diversification of Southern Baptists has become very personal.

"I remember at one time I was the only [African American pastor] in my city who was Southern Baptist," Luter said. "I caught a lot of flack as a result of that. Thank God I'm able to see some of the fruit of my labor, not only at my particular church but in the associations and conventions across the country."

Hispanic congregations also have seen a significant increase over the same span — nearly 63%. The number of Asian congregations affiliated with the SBC has grown by 55%.

Because of the nature of ACP

see STATS on p. 9

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FEB 08 2013



From the editor

WILLIAM PERKINS

The chicken wing crisis

This week brought news that the onslaught of Super Bowl parties planned for this weekend has greatly aggravated a nationwide shortage of chicken wings, the staple at such festivities.

According to the National Chicken Council's 2013 Wing Report (yes, there really is an annual Wing Report), more than 1.23 billion wing portions will be consumed during Super Bowl weekend when the San Francisco Forty-Niners take on the Baltimore Ravens, straining a market already stressed by foodstock shortages and other problems.

To put that into perspective, the chicken council reports, "if 1.23 billion wing segments were laid end to end, they would stretch from Candlestick Park in San Francisco to M&T Bank Stadium in Baltimore... 27 times."

Noting the troublesome drop this year in chickens supplied to processors, the council states (and I'm not making this up), "A chicken has two wings, and chicken companies are not able to produce wings without the rest of the chicken."

So all of you wing enthusiasts out there might have to make do this coming weekend without the vast quantities of your favorite consumable to which you have become accustomed, but you'll still be better off than Nadia Mohamed Ali.

Nadia Mohamed Ali and her seven children were recently convicted by an Egyptian court of attempting to convert to Christianity. They were sentenced to 16 years imprisonment in the harsh penal system of that Muslim-dominated country. Not only did the court prosecute Ali and her family for that high crime, they also sent to prison the government clerks who accepted her application for conversion.

Saeed Abedini would probably be grateful for even one chicken wing, but not because of the current shortage. He's the naturalized American pastor who was sentenced last week by an Iranian judge in that Muslim-dominated country to eight years in prison for threatening national security. His offense? He is accused of helping start Christian house

churches while in his native homeland to build an orphanage.

Since his conviction — he was not even allowed to attend his own trial — Abedini has disappeared into the notoriously brutal Iranian prison system while his wife and two small children in the U.S. anxiously await word of his ultimate fate. It has been reported that his guards won't give him medicine or otherwise have contact with him, because as a Christian he is considered to be unclean.

"The cases will increase in the future," said Samuel Tadros, a research fellow at the Hudson Institute's Center for Religious Freedom in Washington, D.C., in a Jan. 16 FoxNews.com interview about the plight of Nadia Mohamed Ali and her children.

"Eight years is a death sentence," said Jordan Sekulow, the attorney for Abedini's family and the executive director of the American Center for Law and Justice in Washington, D.C., in a Jan. 28 Fox Report interview with Harris Faulkner.

Americans in general are so detached from the real world. While we search high and low for scarce chicken wings, the forces of darkness and totalitarianism close in all around us. American Christians in general seem even more detached. We sit in our padded pews and complain about the temperature in the worship center while our brothers and sisters around the world face daily, unimaginable persecution for their faith.

The juxtaposition of American Christianity and real world Christianity could not be more stark.

It has been recorded that the Romans became so immersed in their culture of pleasure and distraction that they could actually see invading forces setting neighborhoods afire from their lofty perches at the Coliseum, yet were unable to tear themselves away from the grandeur of gladiators and games to save their city. Is that not the picture of America today, and of American Christians?

What will happen if we don't stir from our self-indulgent torpor and get involved in the real world? Time will tell. History already does.

Closing that back door

Numbers of gifted persons and organizations have studied the phenomenon of the church "back door," the metaphorical way we describe people leaving the church. There will always be the anticipated themes of relocation or personal crises. We should recognize those issues, though we can respond to the latter more than the former.

However, all the research studies of which I am aware, including my own, return to one major theme to explain the exodus of church members: a sense of some need not being filled. In other words, these members have ideas of what a local congregation should provide for them and they leave because those provisions have not been realized.

Certainly we recognize there are many legitimate claims by church members for unfulfilled expectations. It can undoubtedly be the fault of the local congregation and its leaders, but many times — probably more than we would like to believe — a church member leaves a local body because he or she has a sense of entitlement.

I would therefore suggest that the main reason people leave a church is because they have an entitlement mentality rather than a servant mentality. Look at some of the direct quotes from exit interviews of people who left local congregations:

- ▶ "The worship leader refused to listen to me about the songs and music I wanted."
- ▶ "The pastor did not feed me."
- ▶ "No one from my church visited me."
- ▶ "I was not about to support the building program they wanted."
- ▶ "I was out two weeks and no one called me."
- ▶ "They moved the times of the worship services and it messed up my schedule."
- ▶ "I told my pastor to go visit my cousin and he never did."

Please hear me clearly. Church members should expect some level of ministry and concern — but for a myriad of reasons beyond the scope of this one column, we have turned church membership into country club membership. You pay your dues and you are entitled to certain benefits.

The biblical basis of church membership is clear in Scripture. The Apostle Paul even uses the "member" metaphor to describe what every believer should be like in a local congregation. In 1 Corinthians 12:12-31, Paul describes church members not by what they should receive in a local church, but by the ministry they should give.

The solution to closing the back door, at least a major part of the solution, is therefore



Guest opinion
with Thom Rainer

to move members from an entitlement mentality to a servant mentality. Of course, it is easy for me to write about it, but it is a greater challenge to effect this change.

May I then offer a few steps of a somewhat practical nature to help close the back door by changing the membership mentality?

■ **Inform church members.** Though I do not have precise numbers, I would conjecture that more than half of church members do not have a biblical understanding about church membership. Providing that information in a new members' class can move an entire congregation toward a servant mentality.

■ **Raise the bar of expectations.** We have dumbed down church membership in many congregations to where it has little meaning. Clarify expectations of members. Again, doing so in the context of a new members' class is a great way to begin.

■ **Mentor members.** Take two or three members and begin to mentor them to become biblical church members. After a season, ask them to mentor two or three as well. Let the process grow exponentially.

■ **Train members.** Almost 100% of pastors agree that their role is to train and equip members, but almost three-fourths of these pastors have no plans on how they will train them (see Ephesians 4:11-13).

■ **Encourage people to be in small groups.** Those in Sunday School classes and small groups are more likely to be informed and functioning church members. In other words, there is a much greater likelihood of a member with a servant mentality to be in a small group than not.

What are you doing in your church to close the back door? What are you doing to move members from an entitlement mentality to a servant mentality?

Rainer is president of LifeWay Christian Resources of the Southern Baptist Convention, headquartered in Nashville. This column first appeared on his website, www.ThomRainer.com, and appears here courtesy of Baptist Press.

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Miss. pastor helping design LifeWay study for fall

NASHVILLE (BP and local reports) — More than one and a half million people will see major improvements in their Bible study materials as LifeWay Christian Resources of the Southern Baptist Convention in Nashville launches an updated and enhanced version this fall of its leading Bible study series — Bible Studies for Life.

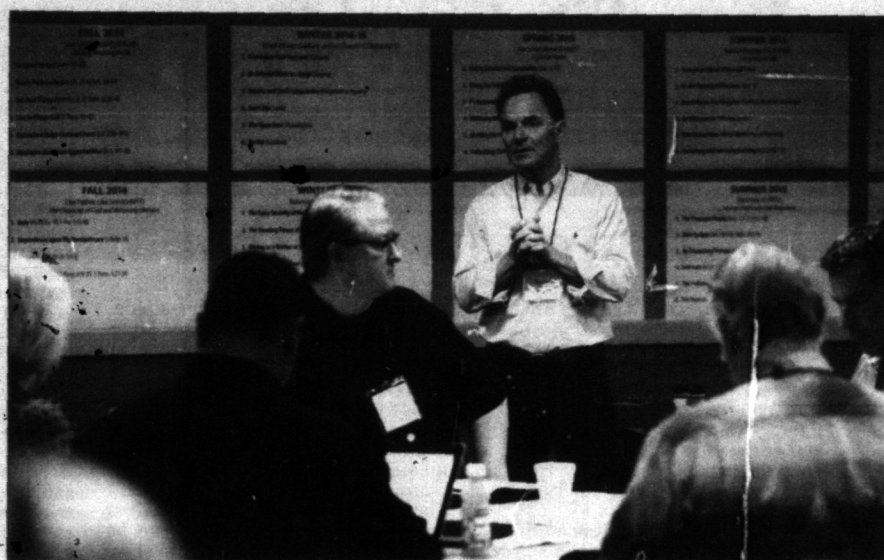
The curriculum currently is used by more than 30,000 churches. "We listened to churches using the study and learned of three foundational ways Bible Studies for Life could be an even more effective tool in church ministry," said David Francis, LifeWay's director of Sunday School.

The new curriculum will help churches connect the unconnected, strengthen families, and disciple people with wisdom, said Francis, who also serves as managing editor of Bible Studies for Life.

"The improvements in the series are designed to help the local church meet the spiritual needs of its members and community through life application of the Bible," he said.

Redesigning LifeWay's most popular curriculum was a daunting task, Francis said. "Bible Studies for Life has dozens of different products and each had to be examined from a new perspective. One of the first things we did was ask Ronnie Floyd, pastor of one of the largest churches in the country, to serve as general editor to help us design this material from a church perspective."

Floyd, senior pastor of Cross Church of Northwest Arkansas (formerly First Baptist



DESIGN TEAM — Ronnie Floyd (standing) discusses Bible Studies for Life's enhancements and redesign with members of an advisory council at LifeWay's headquarters in Nashville. Floyd, pastor of Cross Church in Springdale, Ark., is the general editor of the curriculum currently used by more than 30,000 churches. (BP photo)

Church of Springdale, Ark.), said the foremost benefit of the new curriculum is it will be an experience "where the Bible meets your life. Bible Studies for Life focuses on real-life issues in order to engage the unreached and unchurched in our communities."

"We want to see the small group ministries of churches, however and whenever they meet, return to a commitment to evangelize people through the ministry of their groups," Floyd said, "so whether a

church operates a small groups ministry primarily on Sunday mornings at church, on weekdays away from the campus, or a hybrid of the two, there will be options that meet the needs of their groups."

To help develop the new study plan, Floyd and Francis enlisted an advisory team of scholars and church leaders from across the nation known for applying the Bible to life. The council, which met for two intense days of work last fall, also identified some of the most

pressing real-life issues people face day to day.

Among the council members is Chip Henderson, pastor of Pinelake Church in Brandon. Members continued to review proposed drafts of plans, titles, sample lessons, and resources throughout the winter.

The study will be available in multiple formats, both print and digital. Each quarterly edition of the materials will include two six-week studies, plus a special focus session. Francis said each session will be built around one

main point, which will be printed repeatedly throughout the study session.

"Participants should leave their group with a clear understanding of the key point," he said.

Floyd said parents "will also find support materials to help them have conversations with their kids about their group Bible study experience, primarily an exciting new tool called One Conversation. We want to help parents reinforce what their children are learning in their Bible study group and support them in their role as the primary disciple-makers of their children."

Twice a year, churches can choose to address the same subject matter over a six-week period from the pulpit and in the small group ministry. A campaign kit will be available to assist pastors in this process.

New elements designed for Bible Studies for Life: Kids (formerly Bible Teaching for Kids) include weekly videos, new teaching pictures, activity pages, and a family app.

"We pray individuals and families will experience life change as they interact with the biblical material in their groups each week," Floyd said. "We are optimistic that as Christ followers are disciplined through the teaching of God's Word their lives will be transformed and in turn entire communities will be impacted by the Gospel."

The new Bible Studies for Life materials are slated for pre-order in May for the fall quarter. Sample lessons and resources are available for preview at LifeWay.com/FallPreview.

2012 described as good year for pro-life movement

"Now, to be clear, my goal, and the goal of many of those joining me here today, is to make abortion, at any stage, a thing of the past. We cannot, and we will not, stand idly by while the unborn are going through the agony of having their lives ended."

Gov. Rick Perry
Texas

WASHINGTON (BP and local reports) — As the United States observed the 40th anniversary of legalized abortion on Jan. 22, a pro-abortion group was recognizing what pro-life advocates say are gains in restricting the number of abortions taking place every year despite the Obama administration's efforts to expand the controversial practice.

In 2012, 43 pro-life provisions went into effect in 19 states, the second highest number after states enacted 92 pro-life laws in 2011.

The numbers come from a report published by the pro-abortion Guttmacher Institute, which calculated the number of pro-life provisions rather than bills or laws, since bills often have multiple provisions.

While the Guttmacher Institute predictably bemoaned the number of states restricting abortions, pro-life advocates rejoiced over lives saved.

"For those who have been in the pro-life trenches for years, the remarkable passage of so many pro-life pieces of legislation should give these faithful warriors much hope and encouragement," bioethics analyst Dawn McBane wrote on CitizenLink.com.

Arizona led all states that passed pro-life laws with seven, followed by Kansas, Louisiana, Oklahoma, South Dakota, and Wisconsin,

which all enacted three or more laws.

While not listed by the sheer number of pro-life laws passed, Mississippi became a major national story after legislators enacted significant legislation in the battle for the unborn, requiring all physicians who perform abortions in Mississippi to be OB-GYN certified and have admitting privileges at a local hospital.

Physicians at the state's sole remaining abortion clinic in Jackson have not been able to attain admitting privileges, and the clinic has filed a federal lawsuit to block the law. A federal judge in Jackson has stopped enforcement of the law for the present time.

Most of the provisions passed around the country focused on banning late-term abortions, limiting abortion coverage under the health care law, and regulating medication abortions, Guttmacher said. Late-term abortions are described as abortions after 20 weeks, which studies found is the time when preborn babies feel pain. Currently, seven states ban abortions at 20 weeks, while similar laws in Arizona and Georgia are facing court challenges.

Four states enacted provisions to counter President Obama's healthcare law by banning abortion coverage in insurance exchanges, except in cases of life endangerment. Three

states prohibited the use of telemedicine, which allows physicians to dispense abortion drugs through webcams.

Many provisions also require pregnant women to have an ultrasound before having an abortion. According to Option Ultrasound, when a woman sees an ultrasound of her baby, she is 60% more likely to proceed with the pregnancy.

Some states also increased regulation on abortion providers so that they follow the same safety laws as other medical centers that perform outpatient surgeries. Other provisions included securing admitting privileges at hospitals near abortion centers in the case of botched abortions.

The pro-life trend looks like it will continue. Texas lawmakers plan to introduce six pro-life bills in 2013, with the support of Gov. Rick Perry. The bills range from banning late-term abortions to prohibiting abortion insurance coverage.

"Now, to be clear, my goal, and the goal of many of those joining me here today, is to make abortion, at any stage, a thing of the past," Perry said in December. "We cannot, and we will not, stand idly by while the unborn are going through the agony of having their lives ended."

It is true that all of us live by faith. It may not be a faith that is anchored in our living Lord, but it is faith. For those of you who travel very much by air, you have great faith. You give all of your belongings that you are carrying with you to be stashed away in the belly of the plane and are told that you will get them back when you reach your destination. They take your ticket and you get on the plane. You put your life in the hands of people flying the aircraft that you may never see. You have no clue as to their background and no information related to their training. You have not nor will you probably ever see the people who have made sure that mechanically the plane is in good condition to fly.

Those who are flying the plane are trusting souls themselves because they are talking to folks in the control tower who are giving them instructions so that they will not collide with other planes. Soon you and a number of your best flying friends that you may have never met are going to be lifting off and into the sky, and most of the time it all goes well. There may be some people who you have never seen before in your life coming to ask you if you would like something to drink or a snack to eat. Sometimes you will accept it trusting that everything is fine. Now for a period of time and maybe hours you fly through the skies and trust that you will arrive at your destination. Bless your heart! You are a trusting soul.

Just for a moment let's raise the level of trust. You are not feeling well. In fact, you are really sick.



Directions

With Jim Futral, executive director-treasurer
Mississippi Baptist Convention Board

Living by Faith

You may load up and go to a doctor who you have never seen and whose name you cannot pronounce. You get checked out and are given a prescription that you cannot read. You take it to a pharmacist who you may not know. You are given a bottle of substance that you have not examined and you go home and take it trusting that you are going to feel better and get well. It takes faith.

Even when you go to the bank to deposit a check or some money, you give it to a person that you do not know. You walk into a restaurant to eat food prepared by people that you may never see. You put your children on a school bus to ride to school. You have got to have a certain dimension of faith or you will not do anything. Is it not strange that so many people who do all of these kinds of things every day and many more feel as though

they cannot trust God? It is outside the realm of their trust to have faith in a God who created the universe and loves them more than their capability to understand.

Some people look at the things that I mentioned already in this article and reason that they make thoughtful assumptions about a pilot, doctor, pharmacist, or in other areas of life. They reason that you can have faith in those areas. That is probably true, but the fact is also true that you can absolutely without reservation or equivocation trust in God. You can trust His Word that it is always right. It is never misleading and always without error. You can trust in the provisions that He has made for us to have our sins paid for, removed, and a new life that God Himself is giving to us.

Millions of people have not only ventured to trust what the Bible says

but then they have experienced and testify to its absolute reality. When the Bible says in John 3:16, "For God so loved the world, that he gave his only begotten Son, that whosoever believeth in him should not perish, but have everlasting life," you can mark it down that it is true. You can turn to God and put your trust in His provisions through Christ.

As a youngster sitting in church and listening to a revival preacher bring the Word of God, I felt the touch of God in my heart as His Holy Spirit both convicted and called me that night and I walked down an aisle to tell a preacher that I was coming to meet Jesus. As we sat on the front pew, he opened his Bible and he showed me a verse in Romans 10:9 that says, "That if thou shalt confess with thy mouth the Lord Jesus, and shalt believe in thine heart that God hath raised him from the dead, thou shalt be saved." I bowed my head and put my life, my all into the hands of Jesus. I put my faith in Him.

While all of that has been years ago, it has been forever fresh in my mind, in my heart, and in my experience. It is an encounter that I will never get over even in eternity. Have you put your faith in the saving power of Jesus? If not, I would encourage you to do so today. Trust Him, believe in Him, and put your faith in Jesus Christ, God's Son, and our Savior. Trust Him now, call upon Him, and He will answer.

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OBITUARIES

Milton Giles Fort Jr., 89, who served at the forefront of Southern Baptist medical missions in Zimbabwe for nearly 36 years, died Jan. 14 in Baton Rouge, La. Fort and his wife Wana Ann, also a physician, were the first doctors at the remote Sanyati Baptist Hospital in Southern Rhodesia (now Zimbabwe) after their appointment as Southern Baptist missionaries in 1952. The Forts retired from missionary service in 1988, not long after he was diagnosed with axial dystonia, a muscle condition from which he suffered for many years. Fort received the bachelor of science degree from Texas A&M University in College Station and the doctor of medicine degree from Baylor University's College of Medicine in Houston, where he was presented the Distinguished Alumnus Award in 1990. He served in the U.S. Navy during World War II. He is survived by his wife; five sons, Giles Fort III of Baton Rouge; David Fort, missionary physician in West Africa; Gordon Fort, International Mission Board senior vice president for prayer mobilization and training in Richmond, Va.; Gregg Fort, missionary physician in Zimbabwe; and Grady Fort of Baton Rouge; 14 grandchildren; and six great-grandchildren. More than 200 cumulative years of missionary service are represented in the Fort family.

Luther Russell Bush Jr., 92, retired pastor of Main Street Church, Hattiesburg, and former president of the Mississippi Baptist Convention, died December 18 in Hattiesburg. He was born Sept. 7, 1920, in Columbia. He graduated from Columbia High School and majored in pre-dental studies at Mississippi College in Clinton. On November 17, 1943, he graduated from Atlanta Southern Dental School in Atlanta, Ga., with a DDS degree, was



BUSH



FORT PASSES — Missionary doctor Giles Fort (left) performed surgeries on thousands of patients at the Sanyati Baptist Hospital in Zimbabwe. His wife Wana Ann, not pictured but also a physician, often assisted him as well as African nurses. (BP photo)

commissioned a First Lieutenant in the U.S. Army, and married Sarah Frances Warnock of Atlanta. After serving 3 1/2 years in the U. S. Army and attaining the rank of captain, he returned to his hometown to begin the practice of dentistry with his father, L.R. Bush, Sr. He was ordained a deacon in First Church of Columbia, and served as president of the Mississippi Baptist Convention (1961-62). He was a trustee of the Mississippi Baptist Children's Village, Baptist Health Systems, Inc., in Jackson, and Mississippi Baptist Foundation. He served as a member of the executive committee of both the Mississippi Baptist Convention Board and the Southern Baptist Convention. He practiced dentistry from 1946-86, at which time he was called as pastor of Main Street Church in Hattiesburg. He was 66 years old and served there 14 years before retiring in May 2000. After retiring, he served several

local churches as interim pastor until his health would not allow it. On October 21, 2012, Bush was named Pastor Emeritus of Main Street Church. He was preceded in death by his father, L. R. Bush Sr.; his mother Bennie Perry Bush; and his oldest son, L. Russ. Bush III. He is survived by his wife, Sara Frances Bush; daughter, Carolyn Frances Bush Young; youngest son, John Parks Bush (Ann); daughter-in-law Cindy Bush; six grandchildren; and nine great-grandchildren.

Jimmy Albritton, 81, retired pastor and former home missionary, died January 14 in Picayune. He was a member of Roseland Park Church, Picayune. Over a period of 60 years, Albritton served as pastor, home missionary, and interim pastor. He delivered his first sermon at age six, and his last sermon at age 81. Upon retiring after 25 years as pastor of Zoar Church in Baton Rouge, La., he founded Pioneer Ministries and served the unchurched regions of the United States for an additional 15 years under a partnership with the Southern Baptist Home Mission Board (now the North American Mission Board). Albritton was a graduate of the University of Southern Mississippi in Hattiesburg and New Orleans Seminary. He was preceded in death by his wife of 55 years, Betty Sue Stockstill Albritton; parents, Curtis Lee Albritton and Lessie Mae Albritton; step-mother, Arlynn Albritton; wife, Sue Albritton; and a grandson. Survivors include children Craig Albritton (Kellye); Bryan Albritton (Maggie); and Mark Albritton (Linda); sister Juanita "Snookie" Sherrer; and seven grandchildren. Funeral service was held January 18 at Roseland Park Church. Burial was in New Palestine Cemetery under the direction of McDonald Funeral Home in Picayune.



ALBRITTON

BIBL i O C I P H E R

FSY TO BFLIORROY VOPFAEO GW

KTOXL ASVORXOW, FSY TO NOSK LGASY

FVGAK KTO IXRRFZOE, KOFPTXSZ.

BFLC EXJ: EZJ

Clue: T = H

Have fun with cryptography and exercise your Bible knowledge. A King James Version Bible verse has been encoded by letter substitution. The same letter is substituted throughout the puzzle. Solve by trial and error. Answer to last week's puzzle: Amos Eight: Four

By Charles Marx, 1932-2004, © 2005



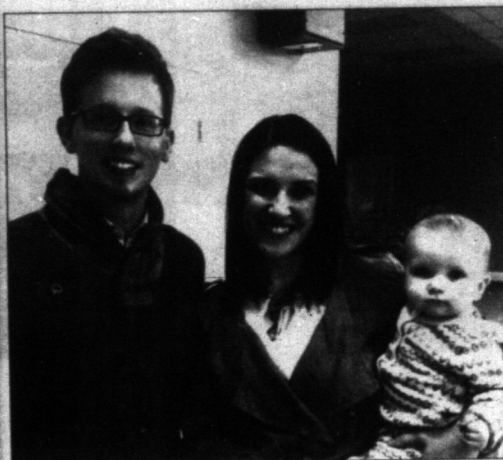
WELL BEYOND
A CENTURY

Baptist proudly celebrates
100 years of pioneering health care
in our community and a continued
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into the next century.

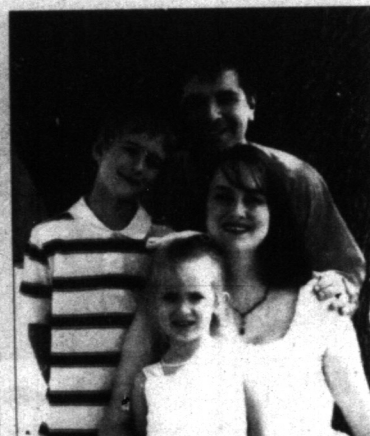


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Staff Changes



INGOMAR CHURCH, UNION ASSOCIATION, has called Mark McDaniel (left) as minister of students. Pictured with McDaniel is his wife Kristen and son Henley.



MAGEE'S CREEK CHURCH, WALTHAM COUNTY, has called Kaven Newsome as pastor. He is shown with his wife DeAnna, son Aron, and daughter Sarah.

MS POSITIONS

PROVIDENCE BAPTIST CHURCH, 1180 EATONVILLE ROAD, HATTIESBURG, MS IS IN SEARCH OF A PART-TIME ADMINISTRATIVE ASSISTANT. If interested, please mail resumes to Providence Baptist Church, Attn: Marc Taylor, 1180 Eatonville Road, Hattiesburg, MS 39401.

IMMANUEL BAPTIST CHURCH, GREENWOOD, IS SEEKING A BI-VOCATIONAL MINISTER OF MUSIC. Resumes may be emailed to ibcfath@att.net or mailed to ATTN: Ronnie Bush, Immanuel Baptist Church, 916 Medallion Dr., Greenwood, MS 38930.

FIRST BAPTIST CHURCH, UNION, MS IS SEEKING A FULL-TIME MINISTER OF MUSIC AND EDUCATION. Please mail resumes to First Baptist Church, Attention: Search Committee, P.O. Box 129, Union, MS 39365. You may also e-mail resumes to joni@fbunion.net.

PINE GROVE BAPTIST CHURCH IS SEEKING A BI-VOCATIONAL "ASSOCIATE PASTORYOUTH MINISTER". Please send resume to Pine Grove Baptist Church, 124 Gather Johnson Rd., Magee, MS 39111.

FULL-TIME PASTOR, FRIENDSHIP BAPTIST CHURCH, STURGIS, MS. The church is located in Southeast Oktibbeha County, the home of Starkville and Mississippi State University. Resumes and nominations may be sent to brown@ext.msstate.edu or to Friendship Baptist Church, 5491 Craig Springs Road, Sturgis, MS 39769, Attn: Pastor Search Committee.

NORTHCREST BAPTIST CHURCH IN MERIDIAN, MS IS ACCEPTING RESUMES FOR THE FOLLOWING POSITION. FULL TIME YOUTH PASTOR. Responsibilities include leading students grades 7-12. Please send resumes to: jobs@northcrestbaptist.com

HEBRON BAPTIST CHURCH IN MERIDIAN, MS, IS LOOKING FOR A BI-VOCATIONAL MINISTER OF MUSIC/ WORSHIP LEADER AVAILABLE IMMEDIATELY. Will be responsible for Sunday morning and evening worship. If interested, please email a resume to hebronbaptist@bellsouth.net or mail to Music Search Committee, 4795 Vivmille Causeyville Rd, Meridian, MS, 39301.



PARKWAY CHURCH, PASCAGOULA, has called Martin Britt as pastor as of Dec: 19. Pictured with Britt is his wife Donna.

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STUDENT MINISTER: Southside Baptist Church, Andalusia, Alabama, is currently seeking a full-time student minister to work with 6th grade through college age students. Please send resume to Student Minister Search Committee, Southside Baptist Church, 1213 W. Bypass, Andalusia, AL 36420; 334-222-4300.

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CAREY BAPTIST ASSOCIATION IS SEEKING A NEW DIRECTOR OF MISSIONS. For more information, please see our website at www.careyassoc.org or send a resume to: DOM Search Committee, P.O. Box 1302, Lake Charles, LA 70602-1302

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SCOTT COUNTY ASSOCIATION has called Reggie Williams as Associational Missions Director. He has 21 years pastoral experience, most recently serving as pastor of Steele Church, Forest.

Just for the Record

HOLMESVILLE CHURCH, MCCOMB, ordained Walter Martin (center) as deacon on January 20. Pictured with Martin are pastor Lee Mathis (left) and Evelyn Martin.



FIRST CHURCH GLENDALE, HATTIESBURG, burned the note on their sanctuary. Shown are pastor Jimmy Hill, Marcia Brock, and Tommy MacDermott.

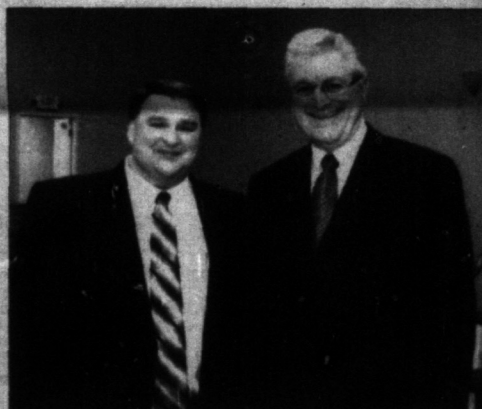


MT. ZION CHURCH, BROOKHAVEN, honored George Higdon, 85, for his service to the church's shut-ins. He delivers CD's of sermons to the shut-ins weekly. Shown is Higdon and pastor Chris DeGeorge.

DESOTO CHURCH, CLARKE ASSOCIATION, held a Brotherhood Pancake Supper on January 13, with former pastor James Smith speaking. Beverly Lindsey and Karen Shirley provided music. Pictured with Smith is his wife Lois.



CLEAR BRANCH CHURCH, WESSON, ordained Chuck Smith (left) as deacon. Pictured with Smith is pastor Wayne Moak.



NEW PROSPECT CHURCH, OLIVE BRANCH, ordained Jimmy Sykes to the gospel ministry. He is the new pastor at Oak Grove Church, Hernando. Shown are Sykes and pastor Bob Curtis.



FIRST CHURCH, BROOKLYN, ordained Jason Wheat as deacon on Jan. 6. Pictured with Wheat is pastor Kyle Jones.

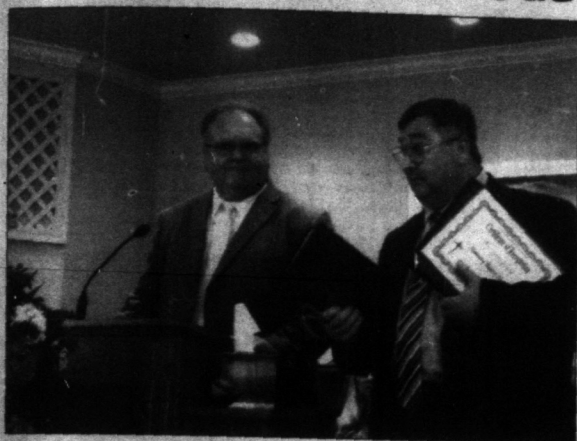


MONTICELLO CHURCH, MONTICELLO, marked the 40th anniversary of the U.S. Supreme Court's decision in Roe v. Wade that legalized abortion on demand nationwide. Students and adults from Monticello Church, Lawrence Association, and Disciple Now placed crosses at the Lawrence County Civic Center in Monticello to represent the 55 million lives that have been aborted since Roe v. Wade.



The GAs of **CALVARY CHURCH, BOGUE CHITTO,** held a mother-daughter night. Shirley Allen and Pam Wallace, leaders; Hal Hatten, pastor.

Just for the Record

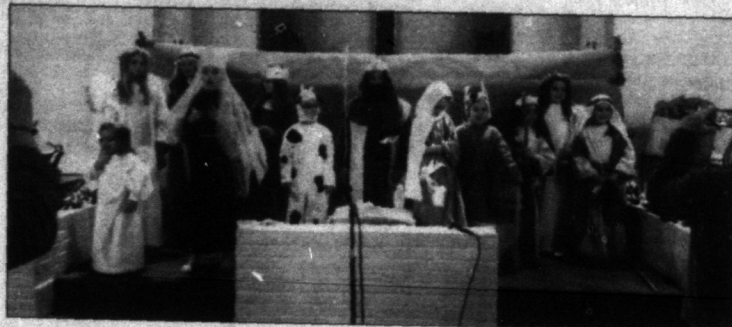


The deacons of **HARMONY CHURCH, WINSTON ASSOCIATION**, presented Jerry Lundy with a plaque honoring him for 25 years as pastor and for 25 years of service to the association. Shown is AMD Paul Blanchard presenting Lundy with a certificate, Bible, and plaque.

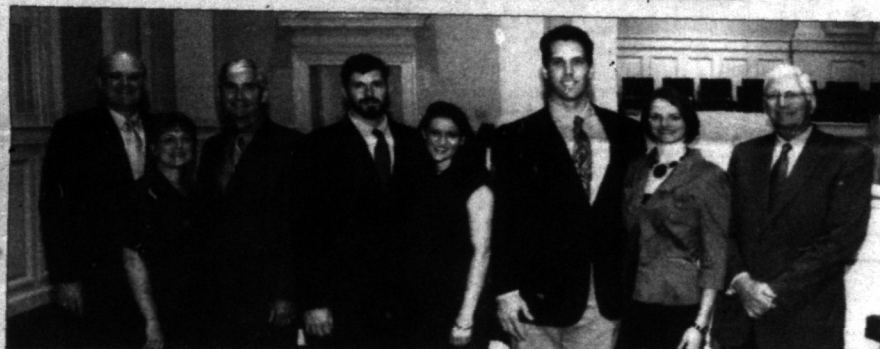


THOMPSON CHURCH, SMITHDALE, burned the \$140,000 note on their fellowship hall and educational building recently. Shown are interim pastor David Millican, Larry Chambers, and Greg Maxwell.

The children's church of **SAULS VALLEY CHURCH, MONTICELLO**, presented a Christmas program Dec. 23.



Pastor Calvin Price of **NEW SIGHT CHURCH, BROOKHAVEN**, is shown reading the Christmas story to the church's children on Dec. 23.



FIRST CHURCH, VICKSBURG, ordained three new deacons Jan. 13. Shown are pastor Matt Buckles; Rick Shelton and wife Lori; Seth Broadfoot and wife Hallie; Blake Rice and wife Sarah; and Calvin Pugh, deacon chairman.

In other Church News:

➤ **Robinwood Church, Saucier**, will host its fifth annual Wild Game Supper on March 23, beginning at 3:30 p.m. Food will be served at 6 p.m. Wayne Flurry, speaker. Terry Upchurch, pastor.

➤ **First Church, Lumberton** will host a Marriage Renewal Weekend on Feb. 8-10, led by Ronnie and Beverly Cottingham of Jus' Jesus Ministries. Cost is \$20 for banquet, sessions, and concert. Nursery will be available.

➤ **Crenshaw Church, Panola Association**, exceeded its Lottie Moon Christmas Offering goal of \$1,600, by giving \$2,902.87. Martha Rayburn, WMU director. Kevin Robinson, pastor.

➤ **Longview Church, Starkville**, exceeded its Lottie Moon Christmas Offering goal of \$1,500 by giving \$2,658. To celebrate the offering, members of the Baptist Student Union at Mississippi State University in Starkville conducted the Jan. 27 morning worship service with music and testimonies.

➤ **Pine Grove Church, Magee**, will host singing group, The Harper Family, on Feb. 3 at 5 p.m.

➤ **Glade Church, Glade**, will host The Triumphant Quartet at 6 p.m. on Jan. 31. Admission is free; a love offering will be taken.



LEFLORE CHURCH, HOLCOMB, recognized five deacons for their service. Seated, Paul Liddell, 40 years; Shelly Livingston, five years; standing, Terry Malone, nine years; Allan Ward, 9 years; and Henry Bailey, 14 years.



Truitt Memorial Baptist Church

Pearl, Mississippi

Seeking New Staff Member!

Truitt Memorial Baptist in Pearl, MS is seeking a part time Music Assistant. This is a paid staff position. Duties will be playing keyboard for a praise team, assisting children's choir volunteer leaders and general assisting the Associate Pastor/Minister of Music. Vocal skills needed, keyboard skills a must. Please contact church office between 8 AM and 12 Noon, Monday-Thursday for more information and to set up interview. 601-939-2975.

cont. from p. 1

"We remain troubled by the case of U.S. citizen Saeed Abedini, who was arrested by Iranian officials more than three months ago on charges relating to his religious beliefs," Viator said, according to Fox News. "We call upon Iranian authorities to release him immediately."

The national security charges leveled against Mr. Abedini are bogus and are a typical tactic by the Iranian government to masquerade the real reason for the charges: to suppress religious belief and activity of which the Iranian government does not approve," USCIRF chair Katrina Lantos Swett said in a news release, adding that Abedini cannot expect justice in court.

Iranian state media had reported Jan. 21 that Saeed would be freed on bail, a report that Saeed's wife, Naghme Abedini, denounced as a lie, according to Fox News.

CNN reported that a trial of Abedini began Jan. 21. The pastor gave the judge a written statement and answered questions by prosecutors and his defense attorney. Questions ranged from whether Abedini encouraged conversion to Christianity and how he financed his trips to establish an orphanage in Iran.

The trial included a hearing from which Abedini and his lawyer were barred, during which a lay church leader was called to testify about his connection to Abedini, according to a blog post by Jordan Sekulow, executive director of the American Center for Law and Justice (ACLJ), which has attempted to intervene for Abedini in the Iranian case and describes itself as legal counsel for Abedini and his family.

OK," she said. "He sounded tired. He said he had come to a realization that they would not be releasing him anytime soon. Up until Christmas he had had hope."

According to World Watch Monitor, Saeed Abedini converted from Islam to Christianity in 2000 and helped start house churches in Iran.

He had been arrested multiple times by authorities but Tiffany Barrans, ACLJ's international legal director, told World Watch Monitor that in 2009 the pastor made a deal with Iran's intelligence police that allowed him to come back to Iran to build an orphanage in exchange for staying out of house church work, an agreement his supporters say he kept.

Before his latest trip to Iran, the religiously controlled Revolutionary Guard took jurisdiction over Iran's Christian community from the intelligence police, Barrans said, coinciding with a more aggressive campaign to drive Christianity out of Iran.

Barrans told World Watch Monitor that the U.S. could put pressure on Iran through countries like Brazil and Turkey, which have strong economic ties with Iran.

"We can reach out to multiple countries to just put in an inquiry on Pastor Saeed. If Iran takes enough inquiries from friends, they will take notice of Saeed's case and ensure justice is done, whether that means he receives a fair trial or they take him out of the Revolutionary Court system, or if they release him immediately."

Richard Land, president of the Southern Baptist Ethics & Religious Liberty Commission in Nashville and a former USCIRF commissioner, called Saeed Abedini's ordeal "yet one more example of the Iranian government trampling the human rights of people who don't kowtow to their dictates concerning religious and political beliefs."

Abedin's trial comes as Iran shows no signs of relenting in its persecution of Christians and their defenders. Pastor Benham Irani continues to languish in prison under a six-year sentence for "acting against the interests of national security," according to International Christian Concern, a Washington advocacy group for the persecuted church.

In addition, Iranian pastor Youcef Nadarkhani, who was acquitted in September of apostasy charges that could have brought execution, was thrown back in prison for a brief stint from Christmas Day to Jan. 8.

His attorney, however, sits in prison under a lengthy sentence, according to the British religious rights organization Christian Solidarity Worldwide. Mohammed Ali Dadkhah, a prominent Iranian human rights lawyer who helped secure Nadarkhani's release, was jailed and disbarred for 10 years in September 2012. Reports indicate his health is rapidly deteriorating.

► **Clear Springs Church, Louin:** Revival, Feb 15-17. Fri.-Sat., 7 p.m.; Sun., 11 a.m. Marcus Burnham, speaker.

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The Baptist Record is pleased to publish news and photographs of special events that take place in cooperating churches of the Mississippi Baptist Convention.

News submitted for publication in The Baptist Record must be either (a) typewritten, (b) neatly printed on 8 1/2 by 11-inch paper, or (c) neatly printed on standardized forms provided by the newspaper. All articles must be received in writing; no articles will be accepted over the telephone.

News may be submitted electronically to the address below, and must be contained in the message segment of an e-mail form. Due to increasing virus threats, no text attachments will be accepted. Photograph attachments are permissible.

Please make articles concise. Include the who, what, when, where details of the story, along with a contact person's address and telephone number.

Photographs may be color or black and white. Instant photos and digital printouts are

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“But as many as received him, to them he gave the right to become children of God, even to those who believe in his name.” John 1:12

If you make a decision for Christ today, contact a local Southern Baptist church for spiritual guidance.

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All news items are subject to editing, and all photographs are subject to cropping. Photographs must depict people. No landscape, building, or object-only photographs will be printed. News items and/or photographs can be published one time only. News items and/or photographs depicting benefits and activities for secular or outside organizations will not be published. Deadline for submitting news is one week prior to requested publication date.

Articles that are not date-sensitive will be published on a space-available basis.

Submit news and photographs to The Baptist Record, P.O. Box 530, Jackson, MS 39205-0530. FAX: (601) 292-3330. E-mail: baptistrecord@mbch.org

Can I get a Witness? • Amos 7: 4-17

If you have ever been in the position of being the bearer of bad news, you probably have had a glimpse of the position in which the prophet Amos finds himself in our passage this week. You may remember in an earlier lesson we talked about the call of Amos by God to be His prophet. He was just a simple, ordinary guy who responded in obedience to God's call. Because of his obedience he was now a witness concerning God's judgment on Israel. In our passage today we discover that there were many who were not very happy with Amos because of the message he was proclaiming. Being a witness concerning God's truth, judgment, and salvation always affords the bearer a precious privilege, and a potential risk. Much like being a witness in a court room some will be happy with your message and others will not—especially the guilty!

Interceding Witness (Amos 7: 4-6)

In chapters 7-9 of the book of Amos we find a series of five prophetic visions seen by Amos. The first two visions (Amos 7: 1-3, 7:4-6) are similar in their form and meaning. His visions of the destruction of crops and land by locusts and fire are met with a deep emotional cry from Amos for God to relent from destroying His people

completely. Fire has always been one of the instruments used by God to judge His people. While Amos is the messenger God has chosen to deliver His message of judgment, Amos also takes the position of an intercessory prayer warrior. All believers are given God's message of salvation to share. We are witnesses of His salvation and of His judgment. Like Amos, we need to be interceding witnesses to the lost who live around us.

Truth-Telling Witness (Amos 7: 7-9)

Amos' third vision is recorded in Amos 7: 7-9. In this vision God is the primary speaker. Amos is no longer asking God to relent from His judgment on the Northern Kingdom. The introduction of the "plumb line" is a sign to Amos that God's judgment is sure and imminent. This vision, along with other declarations by Amos,

are preserved in the Scriptures underscoring that Amos has told the "whole truth" as revealed to him by God. As believers we are called to speak the truth about God to others whether it is His message of salvation or judgment.

Opposed Witness (Amos 7: 10-13)

Explore the Bible with Huey Dedmon



Amos discovers in his encounter with Amaziah, the Priest at Bethel, that even some of his fellow servants were corrupted by the sin that was rampant in the land. Amaziah confronted Amos and asked him to leave Israel and prophesy in Judah. He also sent word to King Jeroboam that Amos was conspiring against him and had predicted the King's death. (v. 11-12) It should not be surprising to us that we meet opposition when we share the message of God. This being the case what we should do is prepare ourselves to meet the opposition head on. God has given us His message to share. We must be like Amos and stand up to the opposition.

Obedient Witness (Amos 7: 14-17)

Here we find the passage that we have alluded to several times concerning God's call of Amos to be His prophet. Amos explains to Amaziah that he was not a prophet or the son of a prophet, but an ordinary herdsman and God told him to go and prophesy. He was in no way making light of his call or his message. In fact, he was using his story to try to help Amaziah see how important his message was to the people. He rebuked Amaziah for telling him to stop delivering God's message to the people of Israel. He also delivered a dire message of judgment to Amaziah concerning the fate of him, his family and the people of Israel. Sure, we are going to meet opposition, but you can also be just as sure that God will deal with those who oppose Him. We, like Amos, have been commissioned by God to serve as His witnesses. When we are obedient to that call, we bring honor to God and we help advance the message of God to a lost, misguided and blinded world.

Dedmon is Associate Pastor for Education/Outreach at Brandon Church, Brandon.

The Truth of the Gospel • 1 Timothy 1:1-20

Of course, I can't wait to see Jesus. I also can't wait to meet Paul "the" Apostle. He certainly deserved that three-letter middle name. As recorded in Acts chapter nine, the Lord Jesus blessed Paul with a drastic interruption to his disastrous Damascus travel plans. His layover in that city included three days of blindness. During the time that Paul could not physically see, his spiritual eyes were opened by the grace of God through Jesus Christ. He had traveled with the purpose of destroying Christians. Through prayer and the comfort of the Holy Spirit, Paul became what he came to destroy. This Paul who called himself the "Pharisee of the Pharisees" was finally able to connect the Old Testament prophetic dots with the New Testament gospel footprints of Jesus. Paul got an "A" in Old Testament law and an "A plus" in New Testament grace.

Paul knew the Old Testament by heart. From before birth, God perfectly prepared this man whom He planned to use to pen half of the New Testament. Paul got it right. After several years of retreat and personal training, Paul would be recognized as an apostle, a messenger dispatched to deliver the gospel. He was a member of the early church. He served there faithfully until he followed the call of God into missions and evangelism. His fellow workers recognized

his gifts and his calling and "separated" him unto the work. Along with Barnabas and other mission team members, Paul became a church planter. Best of all, Paul saw the need for speaking into the lives of the next generation of believers through the process of discipleship and personal growth which leads to multiplication. Spiritually speaking, Paul wanted to have kids and grandkids in the gospel. I am grateful to be a descendant of Abraham by faith and a conduit of Paul's plan for discipleship.

Paul took a particular interest in the ministry potential of two young men. He called them his "sons in the faith." Their names were Timothy and Titus. He nurtured them as young pastors and spoke into their lives on a regular basis. He provided them with deep roots so they could grow strong and stand firm. Timothy would be the pastor at Ephesus in Asia.

Titus would be the pastor on the island of Crete in the heart of the Mediterranean Sea. The geographical footprint of the gospel was expanding from Jerusalem into the Gentile world.

Even if you read slowly, it might take you one hour to read First and Second Timothy and Titus. These three personal letters are called "The Pastorals." Stop and read them right now. If you really want to get serious (and I hope you do!), read the rest of the story in the book of Acts and the rest of the letters of Paul.

Over the next four Sundays, we will be looking at the "five trustworthy sayings" found in these three letters. I can only imagine seeing these original hand-written scrolls filled with personal counsel for Timothy and Titus. They would have been tear-stained and faded and fragile from being unrolled and read countless times by these fellows as they faced the daily

pressures of pastoring their flocks of God. By design of The Real Author, these three personal letters were preserved all the way to the printing press and are included in our bibles today. That means that these "five trustworthy sayings" were also meant for US!

The first of the "five trustworthy sayings" is found in 1 Timothy 1:15. Christ came to save sinners. I am one and so are you. Paul claimed to be the worst sinner of all. We proved him wrong with our own lives. God created the world. God created man in His image and in relationship with Himself. Man rejected God through sin and rebellion. God prepared the world for the coming of Jesus. Jesus came through a miracle birth. He lived a sinless life. He died on the cross in our place as the perfect blood sacrifice for our sins. He conquered death for us. He returned to Heaven. He will return as King. Miracle new birth believers exist to communicate this gospel.

Our world is filled with folks who reject truth and embrace error. Timothy and Titus pastored the same kind of audience. Paul's well known lackluster penmanship was blitized by his penchant for personal discipleship.

Brown is the staff evangelist at First Church, Richland.

Bible Studies for Life with Becky Brown



I hope you do!), read the rest of the story in the book of Acts and the rest of the letters of Paul.

STATS

cont. from p. 1

statistics, it's impossible to know the diversity of individuals within the SBC. Only the diversity of total congregations can be determined.

"We are only able to categorize congregations by ethnicities—not members—because the ACP only asks the predominant ethnicity of congregations, not

individuals," said Richie Stanley, director of NAMB's Center for Missional Research.

Non-Anglo congregations now account for nearly 20% of the SBC, compared to 13.4% in 1998. In 1990, about five percent of congregations in the convention were primarily non-Anglo.

"We are grateful to God for this diversity," said Ken Weathersby, NAMB's presidential ambassador

for ethnic church relations. "It is saying that the Southern Baptist Convention is no longer monolithic. The Southern Baptist Convention is very diversified. It is open to all peoples regardless of ethnicity and race."

Despite the SBC's growing diversity, there are still a variety of ethnic groups in North America with no Southern Baptist presence among them. Mark Hobaf-

covich, NAMB's national coordinator for church mobilization, points to the Albanian people as an example.

There are more than 500,000 Albanians in the United States but no SBC congregations and only one evangelical church among them, he noted.

"As Southern Baptists partner together to plant new evangelistic churches, Albanians and other

people in North America can hear the Gospel in their heart language, come to faith in Christ, and be disciplined so they in turn can make other disciples and plant churches here at home and throughout the Albanian diaspora around the world," Hobafcovich said.

"Only by a movement of God can we see biblical multiplication and the Kingdom of God exponentially expanded."



HONOR ROLL OF CHURCHES

Each January, The Baptist Children's Village evaluates the cash gifts received from churches during the previous twelve months. In this evaluation, it has become customary to publish the top Mississippi Baptist churches in descending order of designated cash gifts. This does not include non-cash gift items or volunteer efforts that many churches contribute. This analysis has become known as the "Honor Roll of Churches."

Dr. Rory Lee, Executive Director

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RANK	CHURCH NAME	CITY	2012 GIFTS
1	First Baptist Church	Water Valley	\$36,439.66
2	Bunker Hill Baptist Church	Columbia	\$27,547.90
3	Morrison Heights Baptist Church	Clinton	\$23,696.40
4	First Baptist Church	Waynesboro	\$18,610.00
5	First Baptist Church	Crystal Springs	\$16,334.47
6	Fellowship Baptist Church	Meridian	\$16,075.23
7	First Baptist Church	Corinth	\$14,391.88
8	First Baptist Church	Nettleton	\$14,352.91
9	Brandon Baptist Church	Brandon	\$14,100.00
10	Seminary Baptist Church	Seminary	\$13,126.99
11	First Baptist Church	Kosciusko	\$12,720.05
12	Topisaw Baptist Church	Bogue Chitto	\$12,300.00
13	Oak Grove Baptist Church	Mendenhall	\$12,230.47
14	Williamsville Baptist Church	Kosciusko	\$11,992.64
15	First Baptist Church	Jackson	\$10,888.85
16	Trinity First Baptist Church	Waynesboro	\$10,802.00
17	East Philadelphia Baptist Church	Philadelphia	\$10,203.96
18	Trinity Baptist Church	Collinsville	\$10,020.25
19	Pine Forest Baptist Church	Richmon	\$9,505.14
20	Memorial Baptist Church	Clinton	\$9,238.49
21	Parloway Baptist Church	Clinton	\$9,148.70
22	Gaston Baptist Church	Booneville	\$8,902.96
23	Calvary Baptist Church	Bogue Chitto	\$8,798.05
24	Topeka Baptist Church	Jayess	\$8,788.83
25	First Baptist Church, Runkelstown	Petal	\$8,618.37
26	Rienzi Baptist Church	Petal	\$8,576.48
27	First Baptist Church	Belzoni	\$8,553.42
28	First Baptist Church	Clinton	\$8,551.22
29	First Baptist Church	Raymond	\$8,500.00
30	First Baptist Church	Brookhaven	\$8,484.88
31	First Baptist Church	Louisville	\$8,395.64
32	Indian Springs Baptist Church	Laurel	\$8,168.43
33	First Baptist Church	Laurel	\$7,561.40
34	First Baptist Church	Vicksburg	\$7,505.91
35	Pleasant Hill Baptist Church	Carthage	\$7,502.15
36	Vaiden Baptist Church	Vaiden	\$7,360.33
37	Spring Creek Baptist Church	Philadelphia	\$7,218.52
38	Sylvarena Baptist Church	Raleigh	\$7,188.83
39	Hurley Baptist Church	Hurley	\$7,088.15
40	First Baptist Church	Yazoo City	\$7,049.83
41	Trinity Baptist Church	Vicksburg	\$6,997.68
42	X-Tended Missions Network	Hernando	\$6,963.86
43	First Baptist Church	Lambert	\$6,798.64
44	Hurricane Creek Baptist Church	Sandy Hook	\$6,749.37
45	First Baptist Church	Hazlehurst	\$6,617.00
46	First Baptist Church	Richmon	\$6,351.00
47	Bovina Baptist Church	Vicksburg	\$6,350.00
48	Calvary Baptist Church	Tupelo	\$6,302.83
49	Calvary Baptist Church	Gulport	\$6,247.19
50	Bel Aire Baptist Church	Abbeville	\$6,143.79
51	First Baptist Church	Vicksburg	\$6,100.00
52	Immanuel Baptist Church	Valley Park	\$6,062.82
53	Valley Park Baptist Church	Liberty	\$6,022.18
54	Liberty Baptist Church	Liberty	\$5,995.13
55	First Baptist Church	Tupelo	\$5,920.00
56	New Hope Baptist Church	Meridian	\$5,894.74
57	Rock Hill Baptist Church	Brandon	\$5,886.15
58	Valley Grove Baptist Church	Tupelo	\$5,819.89
59	First Baptist Church, Lyman	Gulport	\$5,666.67
60	Thrasher Baptist Church	Picayune	\$5,641.29
61	First Baptist Church	Booneville	\$5,602.50
62	Forest Baptist Church	Forest	\$5,583.00
63	Springfield Baptist Church	Forest	\$5,550.00
64	Bridgeway Baptist Church	Holly Springs	\$5,547.70
65	Parkway Baptist Church	Kosciusko	\$5,477.93
66	First Baptist Church	Greenville	\$5,400.00
67	First Baptist Church	Senatobia	\$5,385.00
68	Hollandale Baptist Church	Hollandale	\$5,360.00
69	Broadmoor Baptist Church	Madison	\$5,326.00
70	Fredonia Baptist Church	New Albany	\$5,290.00
71	Fairview Baptist Church	Columbus	\$5,240.19
72	North Winona Baptist Church	Winona	\$5,235.00
73	First Baptist Church	Quitman	\$5,220.00
74	First Baptist Church	Natchez	\$5,160.36
75	Corinth Baptist Church	Magree	\$5,041.66
76	New Sight Baptist Church	Brookhaven	\$5,026.27
77	Meadow Grove Baptist Church	Brandon	\$5,000.00
78	Crossview Baptist Church	Brandon	\$5,000.00
79	West Kemper Baptist Church	De Kalb	\$4,978.17
80	Stanton Baptist Church	Natchez	\$4,900.00
81	Mount Moriah Baptist Church	Bruce	\$4,871.01
82	Mount Zion Baptist Church	Columbus	\$4,868.99
83	First Baptist Church	Madison	\$4,867.77
84	First Baptist Church	Brandon	\$4,832.89
85	Clarke-Venable Baptist Church	Decatur	\$4,826.00
86	First Baptist Church	Magree	\$4,812.07
87	Faith Baptist Church	Meridian	\$4,800.00
88	Old Pearl Valley Baptist Church	Philadelphia	\$4,790.00
89	Anchor Baptist Church	Water Valley	\$4,752.00
90	Calvary Baptist Church	Waynesboro	\$4,738.60
91	Branch Baptist Church	Morton	\$4,720.06
92	County Line Baptist Church	Union	\$4,717.00
93	Shiloh Baptist Church	Port Gibson	\$4,627.90
94	Pleasant Grove Baptist Church	Brookhaven	\$4,615.00
95	Midway Baptist Church	Jackson	\$4,583.34
96	Mount Zion Baptist Church-Tate	Independence	\$4,570.00
97	Dry Creek Baptist Church	Mendenhall	\$4,568.34
98	First Baptist Church	Sardis	\$4,563.83
99	North Greenwood Baptist Church	Greenwood	\$4,563.26
100	Church Road Baptist Church	Horn Lake	\$4,548.40
101	Goodwater Baptist Church	Magree	\$4,548.40

102	Old Silver Creek Baptist Church	Silver Creek	\$4,546.88
103	Meadville Baptist Church	Meadville	\$4,544.00
104	Westwood Baptist Church	Meridian	\$4,481.47
105	First Baptist Church	Meridian	\$4,320.44
106	Country Woods Baptist Church	Byram	\$4,309.57
107	Dublin Baptist Church	Carson	\$4,301.48
108	First Baptist Church	Louisville	\$4,275.04
109	Fellowship Baptist Church	Hernando	\$4,261.92
110	Wyatt Baptist Church	Senatobia	\$4,182.94
111	Ingomar Baptist Church	New Albany	\$4,167.55
112	First Baptist Church	Starkville	\$4,150.00
113	Midway Baptist Church	Meridian	\$4,122.00
114	Eastwood Baptist Church	Indianola	\$4,108.38
115	Union Baptist Church	Meridian	\$4,043.64
116	Shiloh Baptist Church	Louisville	\$4,041.45
117	Grays Creek Baptist Church	Hernando	\$3,985.45
118	First Baptist Church	Union	\$3,931.69
119	Carrollton Baptist Church	Carrollton	\$3,906.70
120	First Baptist Church	Eupora	\$3,902.08
121	Rocky Point Baptist Church	Carthage	\$3,897.50
122	High Hill Baptist Church	Philadelphia	\$3,870.76
123	Silver Springs Baptist Church	Osyka	\$3,800.00
124	Foxworth Baptist Church	Foxworth	\$3,793.59
125	Deer Creek Baptist Church	Rolling Fork	\$3,743.00
126	Highland Baptist Church	Vicksburg	\$3,725.00
127	Parkway Baptist Church	Houston	\$3,720.93
128	DeSoto Baptist Church	Shubuta	\$3,704.72
129	Liberty Baptist Church	Waynesboro	\$3,600.00
130	Bucatan Baptist Church	Meridian	\$3,594.67
131	Oakvale Baptist Church	Oak Vale	\$3,575.77
132	New Hebron Baptist Church	New Hebron	\$3,552.42
133	Liberty Baptist Church	De Kalb	\$3,525.00
134	Indian Springs Baptist Church	Petal	\$3,451.00
135	New Harmony Baptist Church	Blue Springs	\$3,413.40
136	Mount Moriah Baptist Church	Raymond	\$3,410.00
137	Salem Baptist Church	Clinton	\$3,419.96
138	Wildwood Baptist Church	Clinton	\$3,388.02
139	First Baptist Church	State Line	\$3,352.90
140	West End Baptist Church	West Point	\$3,334.11
141	Star Baptist Church	Star	\$3,299.69
142	First Baptist Church	Long Beach	\$3,303.83
143	Michael Memorial Baptist Church	Gulport	\$3,300.00
144	Tyler Baptist Church	Tylertown	\$3,294.13
145	Unity Baptist Church	Harrisville	\$3,278.97
146	Tommolen Baptist Church	Eupora	\$3,276.50
147	Tate Baptist Church	Corinth	\$3,267.27
148	Central Baptist Church	Corinth	\$3,263.17
149	Beacon Street Baptist Church	McNeill	\$3,257.01
150	Hillcrest Baptist Church	Philadelphia	\$3,250.00
151	First Baptist Church	Byram	\$3,225.55
152	Pineview Baptist Church	New Albany	\$3,225.55
153	First Baptist Church	Laurel	\$3,219.69
154	New Zion Baptist Church	Charleston	\$3,216.82
155	Harmony Baptist Church	Crystal Springs	\$3,204.51
156	Berulah Baptist Church	Walnut	\$3,153.92
157	Palmer Baptist Church	Inverness	\$3,130.11
158	Silver Creek Baptist Church	Prentiss	\$3,114.01
159	Chaparral Baptist Church	McComb	\$3,096.18
160	Calvary Baptist Church	Waynesboro	\$3,080.44
161	Chesterville Baptist Church	Greenwood	\$3,065.10
162	Ephesus Baptist Church	Tupelo	\$3,038.32
163	Pleasant Hill Baptist Church	Forest	\$3,000.00
164	Sand Hill Baptist Church	Quitman	\$2,990.10
165	Poplar Springs Drive Baptist Church	Ellisville	\$2,986.00
166	First Baptist Church	Meridian	\$2,964.36
167	Pine Grove Baptist Church	Batesville	\$2,950.00
168	First Baptist Church	Chicory	\$2,947.36
169	Bethany Baptist Church	Lumberton	\$2,919.05
170	Liberty Baptist Church	Calhoun City	\$2,895.00
171	First Baptist Church	New Albany	\$2,876.00
172	West Laurel Baptist Church	Bruce	\$2,852.00
173	First Baptist Church	Laurel	\$2,845.00
174	Arm Baptist Church	Indianola	\$2,837.43
175	Oakland Baptist Church	Silver Creek	\$2,792.50
176	Sallis Baptist Church	Corinth	\$2,777.72
177	Christ Baptist Church	Sallis	\$2,760.70
178	Pleasant Ridge Baptist Church	Greenwood	\$2,756.00
179	First Baptist Church	Dumas	\$2,746.14
180	Ebenezer Baptist Church	McComb	\$2,742.89
181	West Shady Grove Baptist Church	Bassfield	\$2,720.72
182	Holly Baptist Church	Waynesboro	\$2,711.25
183	Oak Forest Baptist Church	Corinth	\$2,710.17
184	Enon Baptist Church	Jackson	\$2,689.66
185	Ruleville Baptist Church	Jayess	\$2,678.24
186	Ellison Ridge Baptist Church	Ruleville	\$2,670.00
187	Providence Baptist Church	Louisville	\$2,667.40
188	Calvary Baptist Church	Hattiesburg	\$2,660.00
189	Desoto Hills Baptist Church	Batesville	\$2,650.00
190	First Baptist Church	Southaven	\$2,647.71
191	Prentiss Baptist Church	Mathiston	\$2,635.00
192	Elon Baptist Church	Prentiss	\$2,624.62
193	Macedonia Baptist Church	Macon	\$2,600.00
194	Bethel Baptist Church	Myrtle	\$2,594.00
195	Cairo Baptist Church	Poplarville	\$2,585.33
196	Tangipahoa Baptist Church	Ecu	\$2,546.06
197	Wheeler Grove Baptist Church	Summit	\$2,538.97
198	Macedonia Baptist Church	Corinth	\$2,526.36
199	Magree's Creek Baptist Church	Tupelo	\$2,526.00
200	Beulah Baptist Church	Jayess	\$2,524.42
201	Crosspoint Community Church	Magree	\$2,517.37
202	New Hope Baptist Church	Hattiesburg	\$2,515.00
203	Bethsaida Baptist Church	Gulport	\$2,504.65
204	Temple Baptist Church	Philadelphia	\$2,500.00
205	Crystal Ridge Baptist Church	Hattiesburg	\$2,500.00
206	Berea Baptist Church	Louisville	\$2,488.59
207	Evergreen Baptist Church	McCool	\$2,461.54
208	New Bethel Baptist Church	Louisville	\$2,450.00
209	New Bethel Baptist Church	Carrollton	\$2,443.00
210	Oak Hill Baptist Church	Philadelphia	\$2,409.54
211	Whitesand Baptist Church	Booneville	\$2,405.08
212	Brewer Baptist Church	Prentiss	\$2,400.00
213	Walhall Baptist Church	Shannon	\$2,390.15
214	Gatesville Baptist Church	Walhall	\$2,349.00
215	New Liberty Baptist Church	Crystal Springs	\$2,348.39
216	First Baptist Church	Morton	\$2,347.00
217	Mount Nebo Baptist Church	Wiggins	\$2,320.05
218	Wayne Baptist Association	Bay Springs	\$2,300.00
219	Mount Zion Baptist Church	Waynesboro	\$2,298.69
220	Manatee Baptist Church	Meridian	\$2,278.15
221	Zion Hill Baptist Church	Manatee	\$2,251.25
222	Navilla Baptist Church	Blue Springs	\$2,246.37
223	Ackerman Baptist Church	McComb	\$2,242.78
224	Casey Creek Baptist Church	Ackerman	\$2,240.00
225	Cedar Grove Baptist Church	Baldwyn	\$2,238.40
226	Intestate Baptist Church	Lena	\$2,228.23
227	First Baptist Church	Shaw	\$2,219.10
228	Union Baptist Church	Ripley	\$2,199.96
229	Rolling Creek Baptist Church	Sardis	\$2,166.35
230	First Baptist Church	Quitman	\$2,160.00
231	First Baptist Church	Collins	\$2,155.50
232	Arlington Baptist Church	Isola	\$2,149.29
233	Woolmarket Baptist Church	Bogue Chitto	\$2,130.00
234	First Baptist Church	Biloxi	\$2,123.05
235	Cumberland Baptist Church	Amory	\$2,120.01
236	Kolola Springs Baptist Church	Maben	\$2,118.71
237	First Baptist Church	Caledonia	\$2,113.37
238	Mount Olive Baptist Church	Pascagoula	\$2,105.33
239	Pope Baptist Church	Smithdale	\$2,083.93
		Pope	\$2,080.00

240	First Baptist Church	Mendenhall	\$2,054.00	379	Enterprise Baptist Church	Liberty	\$1,316.67
241	Cartersville Baptist Church	Petal	\$2,050.00	380	Calvary Baptist Church	Quintan	\$1,310.00
242	First Baptist Church	Buckatunna	\$2,045.00	381	Antioch Baptist Church	Louin	\$1,307.00
243	Lexie Baptist Church	Tylertown	\$2,040.00	382	Flat Top Unity Baptist Church	Picayune	\$1,306.84
244	Pine Bluff Baptist Church	Hazlehurst	\$2,026.00	383	French Camp Baptist Church	French Camp	\$1,301.57
245	Gallman Baptist Church	Gallman	\$2,000.04	384	Hazlehurst Baptist Church	Columbia	\$1,301.00
246	Northminster Baptist Church	Jackson	\$2,000.00	385	Atlanta Baptist Association	Kosciusko	\$1,300.00
247	Monticello Baptist Church	Monticello	\$2,000.00	386	Ebenezer Baptist Church	Kosciusko	\$1,300.00
248	First Baptist Church	Columbia	\$2,000.00	387	Bethlehem Baptist Church	Benton	\$1,300.00
249	Tusculum Baptist Church	Booneville	\$2,000.00	388	Spring Hill Baptist Church	Waterford	\$1,300.00
250	Short Creek Baptist Church	Tazoo City	\$2,000.00	389	First Baptist Church	Satara	\$1,297.67
251	Arbor Grove Baptist Church	Houston	\$1,995.00	390	Calvary Baptist Church	New Augusta	\$1,291.97
252	Union Baptist Church	Mize	\$1,978.01	391	Shiloh Baptist Church	Sontag	\$1,286.03
253	D'Lo Baptist Church	D'Lo	\$1,970.62	392	Morgan Chapel Baptist Church	Sturgis	\$1,278.15
254	Alta Woods Baptist Church	Jackson	\$1,964.00	393	Hebron Baptist Church	Smithdale	\$1,277.08
255	Remus Baptist Church	Carthage	\$1,957.00	394	Trinity Baptist Church	Southaven	\$1,276.59
256	Chunky Baptist Church	Chunky	\$1,950.00	395	Pleasant Dale Baptist Church	Ena	\$1,270.53
257	Crane Creek Baptist Church	Perkinson	\$1,949.50	396	Pilgrim's Rest Baptist Church	Houlika	\$1,262.94
258	Central Baptist Church	McComb	\$1,945.00	397	Bethel Baptist Church	Hazlehurst	\$1,260.25
259	Shiloh Baptist Church	Big Creek	\$1,930.44	398	Sunrise Baptist Church	Carthage	\$1,259.83
260	Bogue Chitto Baptist Church	Bogue Chitto	\$1,929.00	399	Kokomo Baptist Church	Kokomo	\$1,258.44
261	Harmony Baptist Church	Louisville	\$1,920.41	400	Crossview Baptist Church	Brandon	\$1,255.00
262	First Baptist Church	Coffeerville	\$1,910.00	401	Hillcrest Baptist Church	New Albany	\$1,255.00
263	Scotland Baptist Church	Winona	\$1,909.75	402	Metrose Baptist Church	Beatonia	\$1,250.00
264	Friendship Baptist Church	Sturgis	\$1,900.00	403	New Prospect Baptist Church	Oka	\$1,250.00
265	Antioch Baptist Church	Golden	\$1,890.00	404	Society Hill Baptist Church	Oak Vale	\$1,250.00
266	Tishomingo Baptist Association	Tishomingo	\$1,889.11	405	Grace Baptist Church	Laurel	\$1,250.00
267	Friendship West Baptist Church	Tutwiler	\$1,877.48	406	Union Baptist Church	Crosby	\$1,245.00
268	Providence Baptist Church	Ackerman	\$1,875.00	407	Camp Creek Baptist Church	Curtown	\$1,241.69
269	Corinth Baptist Church	Raleigh	\$1,865.00	408	Hebron Baptist Church	Meridian	\$1,235.87
270	First Baptist Church	Blow	\$1,859.13	409	Calvary Baptist Church	Summit	\$1,231.75
271	First Baptist Church	Brooklyn	\$1,856.96	410	Easthaven Baptist Church	Brookhaven	\$1,225.00
272	Crowder Baptist Church	Crowder	\$1,854.98	411	Briar Hill Baptist Church	Florence	\$1,220.66
273	First Baptist Church	Summit	\$1,843.48	412	West Union Baptist Church	Carriere	\$1,219.79
274	Bethany Baptist Church	Potts Camp	\$1,829.09	413	Harperville Baptist Church	Harperville	\$1,215.00
275	Courtland Baptist Church	Courtland	\$1,825.00	414	Spring Hill Baptist Church	Oakland	\$1,210.00
276	Longview Heights Baptist Church	Olive Branch	\$1,801.03	415	Broadway Baptist Church	Southaven	\$1,200.00
277	Mount Pisgah Baptist Church	Carrollton	\$1,800.79	416	Sharkley-Inaugate Baptist Association	Valley Park	\$1,200.00
278	Oakview Baptist Church	Terry	\$1,800.00	417	Wellman Baptist Church	Bogue Chitto	\$1,200.00
279	Glenfield Baptist Church	New Albany	\$1,800.00	418	Furns Baptist Church	Pontotoc	\$1,200.00
280	Eastside Baptist Church	Pearl	\$1,799.01	419	First Baptist Church	Bay St Louis	\$1,200.00
281	Causeyville Baptist Church	Meridian	\$1,784.75	420	County Line Baptist Church	Crystal Springs	\$1,200.00
282	Skene Baptist Church	Skene	\$1,781.00	421	Mount Zion Baptist Church	Florence	\$1,200.00
283	Kennedy Springs Baptist Church	Magge	\$1,778.18	422	Friendship Baptist Church	Brookhaven	\$1,200.00
284	Ludlow Baptist Church	Ludlow	\$1,772.34	423	East Pleasant Grove Baptist Church	Quilman	\$1,200.00
285	Ellistown Baptist Church	Blue Springs	\$1,769.00	424	Corinth Baptist Church	Carthage	\$1,200.00
286	Macedonia Baptist Church	Brookhaven	\$1,760.05	425	Immanuel Baptist Church	Magnolia	\$1,200.00
287	Cornerstone Baptist Church	Balesville	\$1,755.11	426	Tyro Baptist Church	Senatobia	\$1,200.00
288	Good Hope Baptist Church	Philadelphia	\$1,750.00	427	Parkway Baptist Church	Hernando	\$1,200.00
289	Good Hope Baptist Church	Forest	\$1,738.77	428	Liberty Baptist Church	Forest	\$1,200.00
290	Clifton Baptist Church	Itta Bena	\$1,736.00	429	New Hope Baptist Church	Foxworth	\$1,200.00
291	First Baptist Church	Marion	\$1,735.25	430	New Black Jack Baptist Church	Union	\$1,200.00
292	First Baptist Church	Corinth	\$1,718.37	431	Heptzibah Baptist Church	Shubuta	\$1,200.00
293	Calvary Baptist Church	Ethel	\$1,717.09	432	Bethel Baptist Church	Liberty	\$1,200.00
294	Ethel Baptist Church	Crystal Springs	\$1,714.00	433	Bethel Baptist Church	Holcomb	\$1,200.00
295	Pilgrim's Rest Baptist Church	Ariakabula	\$1,708.88	434	Oloah First Baptist Church	Sumra	\$1,200.00
296	Arbuthia Baptist Church	Picayune	\$1,707.00	435	Calvary West Point Baptist Church	West Point	\$1,200.00
297	New Palestine Baptist Church	Braxton	\$1,705.00	436	New Home Baptist Church	Fulton	\$1,198.84
298	Braxton Baptist Church	Flora	\$1,700.00	437	White Oak Baptist Church	Carthage	\$1,198.00
299	First Baptist Church	Ripley	\$1,700.00	438	First Baptist Church	Canton	\$1,198.00
300	Lebanon Baptist Church	Taylorville	\$1,690.17	439	Oakland Baptist Church	Oakland	\$1,196.00
301	Mount Zion Baptist Church	Taylorville	\$1,689.00	440	Siloam Baptist Church	Meadville	\$1,194.56
302	First Baptist Church	Magge	\$1,680.00	441	Siloam Baptist Church	Iuka	\$1,190.00
303	New Hope Baptist Church	Oxford	\$1,672.00	442	South Crossroads Baptist Church	Walnut	\$1,175.73
304	Union West Baptist Church	Louisville	\$1,661.68	443	Bethlehem Baptist Church	Wesson	\$1,175.25
305	Good Hope Baptist Church	Goodman	\$1,655.56	444	Philadelphia Baptist Church	Philadelphia	\$1,174.19
306	Main Street Baptist Church	Poplarville	\$1,653.16	445	Mount Olive Baptist Church	Philadelph	\$1,172.00
307	Steeple Hollow Baptist Church	Newton	\$1,650.00	446	Slayden Baptist Church	Lamar	\$1,162.00
308	Mount Vernon Baptist Church	Coldwater	\$1,643.75	447	Bond Baptist Church	Laurel	\$1,164.00
309	First Baptist Church	Collinsville	\$1,629.23	448	Magnolia Baptist Church	Saltito	\$1,154.00
310	First Baptist Church	Summit	\$1,625.00	449	Birmingham Ridge Baptist Church	Ecu	\$1,150.00
311	West Jackson Street Church	Summit	\$1,620.00	450	Ecru Baptist Church	Pascagoula	\$1,150.00
312	Moak's Creek Baptist Church	Foxworth	\$1,619.77	451	Arlington Heights Baptist Church	Leakesville	\$1,150.00
313	Holly Springs Baptist Church	Southaven	\$1,619.55	452	First Baptist Church	Smithdale	\$1,143.87
314	Carnegie Hills Baptist Church	Sebastopol	\$1,615.00	453	Calvary Baptist Church	Golden	\$1,140.00
315	Sebastopol Baptist Church	Terry	\$1,614.01	454	Salem Baptist Church	Bogue Chitto	\$1,136.75
316	First Baptist Church	Walnut Grove	\$1,605.82	455	Bethel Baptist Church	Kosciusko	\$1,133.43
317	Standing Pine Baptist Church	McLain	\$1,600.00	456	Second Baptist Church	Ellisville	\$1,130.00
318	Leaf Baptist Church	Gulfport	\$1,595.00	457	First Baptist Church	Carrollton	\$1,127.00
319	Grace Memorial Baptist Church	Decatur	\$1,593.51	458	Liberty Baptist Church	Pontotoc	\$1,119.20
320	Beulah Baptist Church	Cleveland	\$1,590.00	459	Oak Dale Baptist Church	Smithville	\$1,117.00
321	Immanuel Baptist Church	Walnut	\$1,582.39	460	Smithville Baptist Church	Calhoun City	\$1,115.69
322	Oakland Baptist Church	Sumrall	\$1,575.00	461	First Baptist Church	Starkville	\$1,110.23
323	New Hope Baptist Church	McComb	\$1,570.00	462	New Hope Baptist Church	Tupelo	\$1,110.00
324	West McComb Baptist Church	Brookhaven	\$1,560.56	463	Mount Vernon Baptist Church	Tinsley	\$1,105.00
325	Gum Grove Baptist Church	Ripley	\$1,560.00	464	Tinsley Baptist Church	Roxie	\$1,103.25
326	West Ripley Baptist Church	Caledonia	\$1,545.00	465	Union Baptist Church	Raleigh	\$1,100.00
327	Border Springs Baptist Church	Myrtle	\$1,528.00	466	Acts Baptist Church	Nettleton	\$1,100.00
328	Temple Baptist Church	Shuqualak	\$1,525.00	467	Union Baptist Church	Carthage	\$1,100.00
329	Shuqualak Baptist Church	Columbia	\$1,518.29	468	Mount Carmel Baptist Church	Moorhead	\$1,100.00
330	Cedar Grove Baptist Church	Hazlehurst	\$1,518.00	469	Mogorhead Baptist Church	Potts Camp	\$1,100.00
331	New Providence Baptist Church	Sturgis	\$1,500.00	470	Salem Baptist Church	Eupora	\$1,100.00
332	Sturgis Baptist Church	Lena	\$1,500.00	471	Montevista Baptist Church	Poplarville	\$1,094.84
333	Jacoda Baptist Church	Fulton	\$1,500.00	472	Faith Memorial Baptist Church	Picayune	\$1,093.40
334	Trinity Baptist Church	Roxie	\$1,500.00	473	Goodyear Baptist Church	Dumas	\$1,092.00
335	Roxie Baptist Church	Tupelo	\$1,500.00	474	Pine Grove Baptist Church	Carthage	\$1,085.68
336	Harrisburg Baptist Church	Tupelo	\$1,500.00	475	Trinity Baptist Church	Bay Springs	\$1,079.00
337	Auburn Baptist Church	Doddsville	\$1,500.00	476	Lake Como Baptist Church	Natchez	\$1,076.00
338	Roundway Baptist Church	Tylertown	\$1,500.00	477	Cliff Temple Baptist Church	Gloster	\$1,075.00
339	Cristal Springs Baptist Church	Hillsboro	\$1,499.00	478	Galilee First Baptist Church	Gore Springs	\$1,071.51
340	Hillsboro Baptist Church	Cleveland	\$1,483.33	479	Core Springs Baptist Church	Hattiesburg	\$1,070.00
341	First Baptist Church	Lucedale	\$1,480.20	480	Autumn Ridge Baptist Church	Sumrall	\$1,064.00
342	Shady Grove Baptist Church	Newton	\$1,476.54	481	First Baptist Church	Scobba	\$1,063.00
343	Calvary Baptist Church	Louise	\$1,473.00	482	Scobba Baptist Church	Weir	\$1,059.62
344	First Baptist Church	Carthage	\$1,470.00	483	New Haven Baptist Church	De Kalb	\$1,056.00
345	Midway Baptist Church	Enterprise	\$1,467.00	484	Union Hill Baptist Church	Union	\$1,050.00
346	Fellowship Baptist Church	Louin	\$1,458.00	485	Antioch Baptist Church	Anguilla	\$1,050.00
347	Leaf River Baptist Church	McCool	\$1,451.68	486	Straight Bayou Baptist Church	Victoria	\$1,041.74
348	McCool Baptist Church	Madison	\$1,446.00	487	Macedonia Baptist Church	Summit	\$1,040.21
349	Twin Lakes Baptist Church	Belden	\$1,439.00	488	Montgomery Baptist Church	Corinth	\$1,040.00
350	Longview Baptist Church	Seminary	\$1,433.16	489	Kendrick Baptist Church	Corinth	\$1,040.00
351	Union South Baptist Church	Oxford	\$1,425.00	490	West Corinth Baptist Church	Bay Springs	\$1,040.00
352	North Oxford Baptist Church	Cleveland	\$1,418.95	491	Bay Springs Baptist Church	Richton	\$1,037.93
353	Morrison Chapel Baptist Church	Olive Branch	\$1,416.80	492	Buck Creek Baptist Church	Rosedale	\$1,037.65
354	Fairhaven Baptist Church	Philadelphia	\$1,400.00	493	First Baptist Church	Laurel	\$1,029.00
355	Pearl River Community Baptist Church	Baldwyn	\$1,400.00	494	Plainway Baptist Church	Lucedale	\$1,026.00
356	Dry Creek Baptist Church	Woodland	\$1,400.00	495	Rocky Creek Baptist Church	Natchez	\$1,025.20
357	Pleasant Grove Baptist Church	Richton	\$1,400.00	496	Morgantown Baptist Church	Vardaman	\$1,022.00
358	Good Hope Baptist Church	Ecu	\$1,398.83	497	New Providence Baptist Church	Tishomingo	\$1,020.00
359	Center Hill Baptist Church	Carthage	\$1,397.00	498	Tishomingo Baptist Church	Pearl	\$1,019.60
360	County Line Baptist Church	Magge	\$1,394.23	499	First Baptist Church	Magnolia	\$1,017.67
361	Siloam Baptist Church	Magnolia	\$1,391.23	500	Bethsaida Baptist Church	French Camp	\$1,011.64
362	Unity Baptist Church	Seminary	\$1,390.00	501	Salem Baptist Church	Raleigh	\$1,009.79
363	Lowery Creek Baptist Church	Georgetown	\$1,387.70	502	Raymond Road Baptist Church	Jackson	\$1,007.01
364	Georgetown Baptist Church	Bruce	\$1,380.41	503	Niggerville Baptist Church	Rienzi	\$1,006.30
365	Banner Baptist Church	Eupora	\$1,380.00	504	Woodland Hills Baptist Church	Jackson	\$1,005.00
366	Pilgrim's Rest Baptist Church	Pheba	\$1,375.00	505	Holcomb Baptist Church	Holcomb	\$1,004.43
367	Pheba Baptist Church	Tylertown	\$1,368.56	506	Barton First Baptist Church	Byhalia	\$1,003.00
368	Bogue Chitto Baptist Church	Eta	\$1,362.57	507	Conway Baptist Church	Carthage	\$1,000.00
369	Bethel Baptist Church	Blue Springs	\$1,361.66	508	Mars Hill Baptist Church	Philadelphia	\$1,000.00
370	Center Baptist Church	Mendenhall	\$1,353.30	509	Oregon Memorial Church	Lexington	\$1,000.00
371	Macedonia Baptist Church	Pope	\$1,350.00	510	Ocobla Baptist Church	Philadelphia	\$1,000.00
372	Enid Lake Baptist Church	Saucier	\$1,347.25	511	Hopewell Baptist Church	Lake	\$1,000.00
373	Success Baptist Church	Collins	\$1,341.95	512	South Louisville Baptist Church	Louisville	\$1,000.00
374	Salem Baptist Church	Amory	\$1,335.82	513	First Baptist Church	Anguilla	\$1,000.00
375	Meadowood Baptist Church	Jackson	\$1,331.62	514	Black Jack Baptist Church	Vaughan	\$1,000.00
376	Highland Baptist Church	Ackerman	\$1,325.97				
377	Chester Baptist Church	De Kalb	\$1,325.00				
378	DeKalb Baptist Church						

'Les Mis' divisive over spiritual themes, worldly scenes

NASHVILLE (BP) — Many Christians already have seen the blockbuster, *Les Misérables*, and have voiced glowing reactions, partly the hoped-for result of a marketing campaign to the faith community by the movie's makers.

Yet there are two ways to respond to the film from a Christian perspective. While many people laud it as an inspiring masterpiece, others believe the film's sexual content, violence, and language make it unfit for Christians.

According to a CNN report, the movie's maker NBC Universal sought to capitalize on the movie's themes of grace, mercy, and redemption by promoting *Les Misérables* to pastors, Christian radio hosts, and other influential people in Christian circles.

Focus on the Family in Colorado Springs is among the supporters of *Les Misérables*, partnering with promoter Grace Hill Media for a special screening, according to CNN. Focus on the Family invited adoption agencies, child welfare officials, and church leaders throughout the state to preview the film.

"We're trying to raise awareness for the needs of kids, particularly in the foster care system, who don't have any families," Kelly Rosati, vice president of community outreach for Focus on the Family, told CNN. "We love to come alongside them and welcome them home, and for that reason, we loved the movie."

Rosati added that *Les Misérables* "is able to engage the heart in a way straight facts and calls to action can never do."

Les Misérables won Golden Globe awards on Jan. 13 for best musical or comedy, best actor, and best supporting actress. The film has been nominated for several Academy Awards, including best picture, best actor, and best supporting actress.

Southern Baptist support

Among Southern Baptists, *Les Misérables* also has found support. Former Southern Baptist Convention president Bryant Wright, pastor of Johnson Ferry Church in suburban Atlanta, tweeted, "Seeing *Les Misérables* may do more to build up adoption than any article or policy discussion. Don't miss it!"

Trevin Wax, managing editor of The Gospel Project, a new Bible study curriculum from LifeWay Christian Resources of the Southern Baptist Convention in Nashville, wrote a positive review of *Les Misérables* that appeared on Crosswalk.com.

"I am a fan of the book. I am a fan of the musical. Now, finally, I am a fan of the movie," Wax wrote, noting the "pervasiveness of Christian imagery in the film."

"We see the ugliness of sin: theft, hypocrisy, and immorality," Wax wrote. "The darkness of evil makes the light of love shine all the brighter."

Baptist Press in December carried a review of *Les Misérables* by Christian film critic Phil Boatwright, who called it the best film of the year. "Les Misérables



"Perhaps more than anything else this movie has become a review of where we as Christians have chosen to walk. It seems that we have become systematically desensitized to sin. We are [accustomed] to the effect it has on our souls."

Travis Ragon
licensed professional counselor

WHAT TO DO? — As this unidentified moviegoer decides whether to see the blockbuster movie, *Les Misérables*, the choice for Christians includes input from those who laud the film for its themes of grace, mercy, and redemption, and others who believe its sexual content, violence, and language make it unfit for Christian viewing. (BP photo courtesy of Hope Vunk)

"It's a hundred sermons in one: grace, sin, legalism, courage, love, hope, revenge, adoption, greed, decadence, dreams and hunger for a nobler world. How rare it is in contemporary drama, art and music that God and key moral issues are ever considered with any meaningful theological basis."

Bryant Wright
pastor, former Southern Baptist Convention president

is a parable that clearly conveys the difference between the Bible's Old Testament, where man is dependent upon the laws of God in order to find deliverance, and the New Testament's revelation of God's sacrifice that paid our sin debt.

"This message is successfully and most passionately brought to this screen production."

Though Focus on the Family helped promote *Les Misérables*, the pro-family organization's movie reviewing arm, Plugged In, detailed in several paragraphs the sexual content, violence, and objectionable language.

Prostitutes "expose just about as much skin as is possible in a PG-13 film," the review said, and sexual acts were depicted on screen.

"A young woman and a 12-year-old boy are shot by soldiers, and we see them bleed to death. We see stacked corpses in the street, and the gutters run red," Plugged In said of the violence, in part. The name of Jesus Christ is profaned a half-dozen times.

'Confused and grieved'

Travis Ragon, a licensed professional counselor in the Kansas City, Mo., area and a graduate of Midwestern Seminary in Kansas City, said he is confused and grieved by Christians' enthusiastic support of the film.

Ragon cites elements of *Les Misérables* that he views as directly in conflict with foundational Christian values: instances of the Lord's name being used in vain, pervasive sexual innuendo, gratuitous depictions of sexual acts, and a scene that apparently has left some viewers feeling emotionally raped.

"Perhaps more than anything else this movie has become a review of where we as Christians have chosen to walk,"

Ragon wrote in comments to Baptist Press. "It seems that we have become systematically desensitized to sin. We are [accustomed] to the effect it has on our souls."

One song in the film is so filled with vileness, Ragon said, that Christians who give positive reviews of *Les Misérables* should consider standing before their churches and reading the lyrics aloud. A believer's body, after all, is a temple of the Holy Spirit, he stated.

"As a mental health professional, I have worked with the victims of rape, incest and abuses that many do not want to know exist and most deny happens in their worlds," Ragon wrote. "I see no entertainment value in their graphic depiction on a movie screen... Preachers should perhaps be asking themselves and their congregations why this has become the accepted norm."

The rating system of the movie industry has supplanted the Word of God," Ragon wrote.

Ragon has not seen *Les Misérables*. "I try to research any movies which I might watch, including ones in my home," he said. "...I enjoy music and a good movie. In being a good steward, I try to be diligent in what I give my time and money to."

He said his strong feelings about the film were stirred as he researched it online to discern whether to see it in a movie theater. As he read Christian reviews, Ragon got the impression he was "getting the runaround as to the full content of the movie."

As he found fuller descriptions elsewhere, he was dismayed. "When I read the approvals of what I thought to be conservative Christian sources, I was shocked," Ragon wrote.

By sharing his frustration with

Baptist Press, Ragon said he prays that readers may "look inside themselves and see what God would have them to do" regarding movies such as *Les Misérables*.

Caution to children

Wright explained to Baptist Press why he was glad to have seen *Les Misérables* despite his initial reluctance. "It's a hundred sermons in one: grace, sin, legalism, courage, love, hope, revenge, adoption, greed, decadence, dreams and hunger for a nobler world. How rare it is in contemporary drama, art and music that God and key moral issues are ever considered with any meaningful theological basis."

"Great literature and drama will rarely be theologically pure (which is the case with *Les Mis*), but they are rich when they deal with those issues in a meaningful way, for they cause man to reflect and wonder and discuss the great questions of life."

Wright said the sex and violence in the film are "not nearly as graphic as what can be seen on television and may even lead to a teachable moment if a child has questions." He did advise that parents of children under 12, however, may want to preview the film to determine how comfortable they would be with their children seeing it.

"*Les Mis* addresses man's longing for a better world amidst so much sin and evil," Wright wrote. "We have the answer in the Gospel and it will be fully realized in the Kingdom of God when Christ returns. The movie can be a conversation point to have some meaningful discussions that can lead to sharing the Gospel."

Personal choice

Boatwright, in comments to Baptist Press following his positive review, explained how he can support a film with offensive content.

"We are bombarded by a great deal of media excess, much of which does not feed the soul. So, if you've drawn the line and will not see a movie such as *Dead Man Walking*, *Schindler's List*, *The Passion of the Christ*, or *Les Misérables* because they contain content you feel is abusive, I congratulate you. You are attempting to honor God and witness to others."

"That's why a review should always carry the reason for the film's rating, to help inform you. But I was enriched by the films just mentioned, despite their abusive content," Boatwright wrote.

As a film critic, Boatwright endures many films that assault his senses, he wrote, and few moviemakers prescribe biblical principles as a guide for daily life.

"So, when I see a film such as *Les Misérables*, I tend to do that whole 'the-cup-is-half-full-rather-than-half-empty' thing," Boatwright wrote. "Though there is some PG-13 content (which I list in my review), I didn't find it to be exploitive, but rather used to viscerally work on our emotions."